



How to Make Your Email More Sociable!

10 Tips For Integrating Social Media Into Your Email Campaigns



Return Path Professional Services

Return Path's Professional Services group provides expert strategic consulting to the world's best permission-based email marketers. We are able to combine our deliverability resources and expertise with our unparalleled knowledge of what drives email response and ROI to help clients be more successful with the email channel. We work collaboratively with our clients to improve ROI and response by creating consistent and compelling subscriber experiences across the email customer lifecycle.

In the digital age, social media marketing has become a widespread marketing tool, and although simply creating a couple social networking web pages for your business can help your marketing strategy, it's not always enough.

Despite predictions that email would be displaced by social media, it has quickly become apparent that email is the engine that drives the success of social media networks. However, with consumer attention split between so many different communication platforms integrating social media into your emails is an effective way to cut through the clutter and share your voice with millions of people within your target audience while cultivating brand recognition and awareness.

If you're just starting out or you're currently executing against your social media plan, consider these ten tips on making your email more sociable.



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1. Define a clear goal.

Just because you can use social media in your email, doesn't mean you should. Before you get started, figure out exactly what you want to accomplish. What is your primary goal – lead generation, branding, thought leadership? Content is key, so make sure you have a clear path to success in mind when incorporating social media in your campaigns.

2. Target the right social media and networks.

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter are the top three social media sites, but try to choose the network that will connect you with current (or potentially new) subscribers and deliver the right message. Every site is different and has a unique audience, so think about whom you're trying to reach. Figure out where they are spending the most time and target those networks - even if they're not one of the big three.

3. Send share-worthy content.

The same basic email rules still apply to social media: content and relevancy is everything. If you want subscribers to share your content, then it must appeal to them and provide value to not only them, but also to their extended networks. Keep it short but valuable, creating a clear, concise, and important statement. The more share-worthy the content, the better chance you have of hooking your readers and compelling them to pass on your information.

4. Motivate subscribers to share.

Understand what motivates your subscribers to share and make sure you tell them how to do it with strong and clear calls to action like "share this!" Also track what kinds of content they're sharing and learn from it. If they like sharing charts and stats, then include more of them. If they like sharing product videos, then include more of those. Taking the time to observe subscriber behavior and preferences can make your emails seem more personalized and custom, in turn making them more viral.

5. Make it easy to share your content.

If you want your content to go viral, make it easy for subscribers to pass it along. Links should be clearly visible with strong calls to action, and you may want to test different link placements for effect. Also, explore social bookmarking sites like Del.cio.us, Reddit, or Stumbleupon that make it super easy for subscribers to spread the word.

6. Stay true to your branding, and build a routine.

You've worked hard to create an image, and that image should be reflected in your email campaigns. When your audience clicks through your email to your website, where they end up should have the same look and feel. When linking to a social network, try to keep a cohesive tone in your copy and design scheme that's in line with your company's branding. While you may be limited by how much you can manipulate these sites, your subscribers must still feel connected to the brand when they get there.

Also remember, your brand isn't limited to your company's official website. Your social networking pages all need to clearly reflect your brand as well, and need stay up to date. When you include social media in your emails, make sure that your social networking profiles reflect similar news and content.

7. Be authentic.

If you are driving people from your email to a social media site, the content not only must be meaningful and relevant when they get there, but it also has to be true to the medium. Contribute to the conversation - don't detract from it. Speak from experience and avoid writing obviously fake or inauthentic 'fluff.' All in all, make sure they know who YOU are and how you'd like them to interact with your brand.

8. Measure your efforts.

After all this work, don't you want to know if it was worth it? Make sure you are tracking the results from your social media efforts from your emails. Did your email increase your Twitter mentions? How many subscribers shared the article you emailed? Did your subscriber list increase because you sent great content? What about hits to your social profiles? Create a way to track your social email efforts in real dollars and cents. Facebook and Twitter can now be integrated with Salesforce.com for easy statistic tracking and there are tons of other applications that can help you track effectively. However, remember not to go overboard. Sometimes too much information can hinder your efforts. Figure out what you really need to know to help you create more intelligent mailings in the future.

9. Test, test and test again.

Sometimes little changes make a big difference. No matter what changes you make to your email, testing effectiveness should be part of your normal routine. Adding social media is no exception. You not only want to test the impact your new creative has on subscriber engagement, but you also want to make sure your creative doesn't impact your healthy inbox placement rates.

10. Build trust.

People won't share your content if they don't trust you. Spamming, plagiarism, and other bad business is never a good idea, even if it saves you time. Also remember that sharing goes both ways. Subscribers can just as easily share bad content as they can good content. So cross your T's and dot your I's. Your reputation is on the line all the time in this digital age.

Bonus Tip: Monitor Your Inbox Placement Rates

None of this matters if your emails never make it into the inbox. Return Path research shows that 20% of email is being delivered every time you deploy a campaign. By following email best practices, you can earn higher inbox placement rates and higher response rates from your email program.

About Return Path

Return Path combines state-of-the-industry email deliverability and reputation management tools with the world's largest whitelist and professional services so you can make every email count. Our comprehensive tool set provides you with the data you need to get more of your email delivered to the inbox and get more responses. Our team of experts will help you understand and manage the biggest contributors to poor deliverability so you can prevent problems before they happen.

What Our Clients Are Saying About Us



Jason Goldman
Director of Program
Management, Twitter

“Return Path helped us identify and prioritize our key issues so that we could properly allocate our resources and move forward with a solid plan of action.... Fixing our deliverability problems ended up being faster and easier than we had imagined.”



Josh Ryan
Email Campaign Manager
True.com

“When we saw our delivery rates begin to shift, we knew we had to improve them ASAP. Return Path was able to quickly determine that complaint rates were contributing to our delivery problems. With simple creative testing and by limiting the frequency of the problematic mailstreams, we not only experienced exponential increases to our open and clickthrough rates, but also a 40% increase in paid subscriptions to our service. These small adjustments resulted in a big success.”



Kate Winslow
Email Marketing Manager
Custom Direct

“Before Return Path we thought the bounce reports provided by our ESP were sufficient to track our success. When we learned that 30% of our email was hitting the junk folder or going missing, we knew we had to take action fast. Not only were we missing out on tons of revenue, but our subscribers were not getting the mail they asked to receive. Return Path was able to quickly identify our core problems and served as our staunch advocate to remove blocks at a variety of ISPs... we not only achieved 99% delivery, but increased our email revenue by 18.4% in the first year. We've just renewed our contract in anticipation of two more successful years.”

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